

Germany Good Practices: "Talk with me": 10 photos – 10 hours – 10 encounters: Young language mentors for young refugees

Main Goals

- To integrate young refugees
- To improve language acquisition
- To overcome exclusion and promote integration of young refugees
- Support encounters and hopefully friendship between locals and newcomers

Language is the key to integration. In addition, interaction with locals is necessary to learn more about the culture and customs. Most of the existing material on German as a foreign language is not suitable for volunteers and for young people as it has a heavy emphasis on grammar. Moreover, space and opportunities for young locals are needed to interact and speak with young newcomers, since this often does not happen automatically in daily life.

Therefore we created the project "Talk with me": young volunteers (Germans aged 16 – 25) meet at least once a week a young refugee they are matched up with for at least 10 weeks in the center (e.g. youth center, volunteer center). At each meeting they talk about one specific topic (determined by a photograph the refugee brings along or by what's on both partners' mind. Ideally these meetings lead to a friendship, where no further support or external initiative is needed.

Objectives

- Promote volunteering of young people
- Provide language learning suitable for volunteers & young people
- Provide space and opportunities for young locals to interact and speak with young refugees

Before starting the encounters the young volunteers get a training (8 hours), where they learn about the situation of refugees in their countries, boundaries in volunteer work, ideas and inspirations on how to teach your own language as a non-professional, and an intercultural training. Also the young refugees have to participate in an intercultural training.

Based on 3 years of practical experience with your partner organisations from Bulgaria and Romania a "Language tool box" was created, including learning and teaching material for young volunteers and refugees, for 10 units.

Dissemination

To advertise the project, we used local media and newspapers, Facebook, Instagram, talks in schools and our email-newsletter. But most successfully are face-to-face talks on personal level and mouth-to-mouth promotion.

We also provided a project website, with all the information on how to conduct the trainings and with all the material for the "Tool box".

Resources needed

- Space
- Beamer, flipchart etc.
- Funding
- An inspired trainer with experience and expertise.
- A young coordinator and contact person to stay in touch with participants

Check it out yourself: www.voluntary-mentors.eu

Challenges

- Commitment of young people to volunteer
- Intercultural differences
- Different expectations and time resources of volunteers and refugees
- Finding funding and suitable facilities
- Finding an engaged young coordinator with good people and intercultural skills



Participants of the project "TALK with ME"



"This is a great project. I got to know German people and improved my German. With my language mentor I talked so much about different topics."
Nabil Saif Aldeen (25 years old)

Facts and points:

- ✓ Training for both young volunteers and young refugees
- ✓ Interactive training methods (group work, role plays etc.)
- ✓ The course is free of charge for participants
- ✓ Pilot tests in Germany, Romania and Bulgaria
- ✓ Funding: Erasmus+ Youth programme, Bavarian ministry of work and social affairs, Bavarian volunteer agency ("LAGFA")
- ✓ Manuals with training contents and how to create the tool box in different languages